FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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THE DALAI LAMA

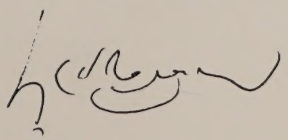
MESSAGE

I am pleased to know that Fellowship in Prayer is going to observe 23rd September 1990 as the Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth.

Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth's living things. This lack of respect extends even to earth's human descendants, the future generations who will inherit a vastly degraded planet if destruction of the natural environment goes unchecked.

The increasing international concern over the state of earth in which we all live is an encouraging sign. We have the responsibility, as well as the capability to protect the earth.

Let us all join Fellowship in Prayer's Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation for the purification of our planet.



May 10, 1990

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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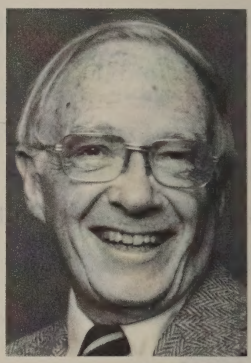


As His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, says to us in his message on the cover of this issue, "Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth's living things." To help put an end to this destruction, His Holiness asks that you join him, and millions of men and women the world over, in Fellowship in Prayer's Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth.

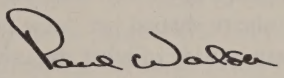
On that day—Sunday, September 23, the date of the autumn equinox—we invite you to arise at dawn and spend the next hour in prayer and meditation: Meditation on the divine nature and total interconnectedness of everything in the universe, including ourselves, and prayer for the compassion and wisdom to act in ways that honor and respect all of God's creation.

By so doing, you will make a significant contribution to the process of healing Mother Earth. All that science and technology and legislation can do must, of course, be done. Above all, however, what is needed is a unifying vision—a spiritual vision. Father Thomas Berry, author of the widely acclaimed *The Dream of the Earth* has written, "We must recapture the genuine religious experience of all life as sacred and all phenomena as manifestations of the divine."

In our idolization of "progress" and development, however, we have torn ourselves loose from the web of life, in which we have our being, and alienated ourselves from the natural world. To heal the Earth, we must first heal those wounds in ourselves. Through prayer and meditation we will find that in renewing our sense of reverence for all of God's creation we ourselves are healed and transformed. We will rediscover in ourselves the sacred truth that all things are interconnected; all things are related to the One.

That sacred knowledge, deeply felt at the level of our heart, can generate the lasting and steadily deepening motivation to act in all things for the good of the Earth. Through prayer, meditation, and ritual we can allow our spiritual imagination and emotions to celebrate a joyful reunion with the presence of the divine that is all around us. By celebrating

the mystery and majesty of the universe and honoring such sacred moments as sunrise on the day of the autumn equinox, we reestablish our relationship with the natural world and come back to harmony with ourselves and "all our relations," as Native Americans say, meaning snails and whales, rivers and mountains, you and me. Let us all do that on Sunday, September 23, on the first Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth.



Paul Walsh
President

Midlife happiness. This is one of the themes in a superb new book, *Safe at Last in the Middle Years*, by Margaret Morganroth Gullette, an educator and researcher who has taught at Harvard, Radcliffe, and Berkeley. Gullette portrays the middle years—from about 40 to 65 or so—as "the grateful age," a harvest time, when the strivings of the 20s and 30s come to fruition and young adult struggles give way to fulfillment and self-transcendence.

Gullette shaped her "new positive vision of aging" in a long and exhaustive study of what she calls "the literature of midlife progress." She describes a whole pantheon of heroines and heroes in 20th-century novels and short stories who undergo "improvement sequences" at midlife, instead of a midlife crisis. Unlike the protagonists in earlier "decline literature," in which life gets worse and worse as the years go by, these characters grow—if not happier—at least more content. This literature suggests that as we age, conflict gives way to resolution, drivenness to freer choices, disillusionment to lowered expectations, and frustration to acceptance. "Aging can feel like a cure," Gullette writes.

In contrast to the mellower middle years, youth looks like a "tense, threatening, crowded and overwhelming time." The shock of the first encounter with death, betrayal, financial need or failure challenges egos not yet equipped to handle so much pain. Dependence on parents first, then on the opposite sex confuses young people yearning for independence and wholeness. Then, too, the exhausting difficulties met in combining careers with marriage and parenting add a separate set of pressures which all in all result in much less happiness than our collective memory likes to assign to youth. A more truthful glance backward at the "golden days" might reveal behind memories of all that fun the long shadow of open-eyed suffering.

If the literature of midlife progress is right—and I think it is—life becomes a bit easier and more enjoyable as the years tick away. By the time we reach midlife, we have experienced enough to know how to cope with anything, to cope with confidence and no small amount of bravery. Seasoned by the suffering of the 20s and 30s, no longer wanting all that we wanted then, most middle-aged people come to the conclusion that life is more gain than loss, and aging itself is an education into wisdom.

The western pessimism that views later life as a valley of tears needs to

be countered, I think, with a more realistic view of the intellectual and spiritual growth people undergo in the second half of life. Anna Freud, the daughter of Sigmund Freud—like her father a famous physician and psychoanalyst—reported that her most productive decade extended from 65 to 75. Fontenelle, an 18th-century French writer and member of the Royal Academy of Science, said at 90 when he was asked which years had been his best that he hadn't ever been much happier than he was then, but perhaps slightly better years were from 55 to 75.

The world-renowned anthropologist and author of dozens of books, Ashley Montagu, writes in *Growing Young* about people who cultivate the childlike qualities of *love, wonder, creativity*, and *the desire to learn* to avoid "psycho-sclerosis, the hardening of the mind." I would mention also the people who give away their time to help others and thus prevent what I call "cardio-sclerosis," the hardening of the heart.

So long as we actively pursue the kinds of virtues Dr. Montagu discusses, and we find some way to give to others, growing older—and even growing old—can only be a blessing. For each year will bring increased discovery of inner wealth, deeper knowledge of God, and greater understanding of the sacredness of aging.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky
Editor

Goodness is something so simple: always to live for others, never to seek one's own advantage.

Dag Hammarskjöld

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.

Rabindranath Tagore

In God's hands are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are God's also.

Ps. 95.4

What is there to life if one cannot hear the lovely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frog around the pond at night?

Chief Seattle

Demolish the verb "to have" in every mood and tense . . . and at once the cosmos belongs to you, and you to it. You are made "one" and merged in the greater life of the All.

Evelyn Underhill

To know of someone here and there whom we accord with, who is living on with us, even in silence—this makes our earthly ball a peopled garden.

Goethe

Only in God's presence do we learn that the glory of being human is not in our will to power, but in our power of compassion.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

A theory must be tested. A fact must be honoured. A truth must be lived.

Sri Chinmoy

Isn't Earth Wonderful?

JUDY FULLER

On September 23, Fellowship in Prayer is celebrating a Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth. Looking forward to that hope-filled day, we bring you a true contemplative's love for the beauty of the earth. In the monastery of Judy Fuller's colorful garden, pine trees and cedars and weeds teach the great, timeless truths of the spiritual life.

Isn't earth wonderful? Whether you look at a panoramic view or a small patch, it's strikingly beautiful, simple, and big, too big for our vision. From earth comes life: it's intimately a part of all that's formed from it. It contains the tensions of seeming contradictions and the harmony of union. It's like God in a way, isn't it?

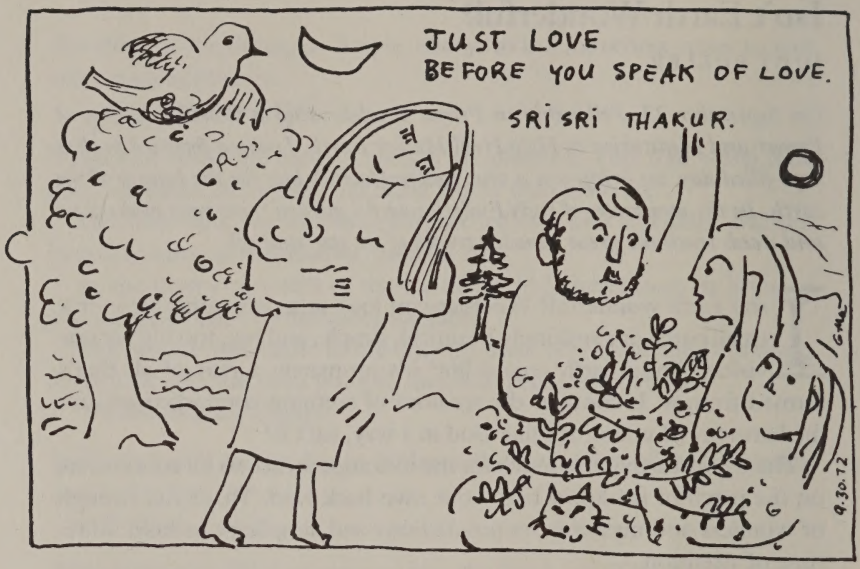
The whole earth is too much for me to comprehend, so I'll concentrate on the patch of it I know best—our own back yard. That's full enough of wonders and mysteries, contradictions and simplicity to hold a lifetime of attention.

We have some pine trees that are magnificent in their weathered shapes. One was hit by lightning and still lives though its top was strewn all over the yard. I used some of the pieces for flower vases and plaques. These trees speak of God's strength, of maturity, and especially of fidelity. They provide lovely shade on a hot day, and in the grey cold of winter their greenness gives hope.

Under a black ash tree I came to know that there's a God. You know that period of doubt that adolescents go through? When I was there, I used to pray, "if there is a God, please let me know, so I can really give my life to You." One day, sitting under the ash tree, I looked up and saw blue sky and two birds flying together: an ordinary sight, but to me, at that moment, it was Beauty with a capital "B." Somehow God was real, touching me, and I was happy and grateful.

We have cedars too (that's a matter of debate in our house; some say they're junipers): tall stately trees that bend way over in the wind. On a very stormy day one or two didn't bend far enough and their tops were broken off. The lesson is obvious. What's wonderful though, is that they've grown new tops and are as tall as ever now—thank God for second chances.

Judy Fuller is a member of the Poor Clare community in Bordentown, NJ.



Gisela Lichtgarn

In a far corner is a weeping birch—weeping trees aren't my favorites, but that corner gives a little more solitude for prayer. Anyway, one day when I opened my eyes after praying, what a delightful surprise: I was covered with seeds! Beautiful golden seeds shining in the sunlight. God was present in that moment—the God of humor, of surprise; God who freely throws seeds on dry, rocky, weedy, and good ground; God of generosity, of the mystery of death that is life. It took a moment to trace the seeds to the birch, and it's been a friend ever since: a sign of call, of promise.

The maple flowers, though plain and green, have their own beauty in their simplicity, and are a sign that it's time to uncover the hardy perennials. They say, "The winter is over and gone; the time for pruning has come." We've all learned the pain and advantage of being pruned. Our maples are different shapes according to the evenness of sunlight they receive. They speak of Grace reaching out to all but sometimes blocked, yet still freely given and providing growth where it reaches.

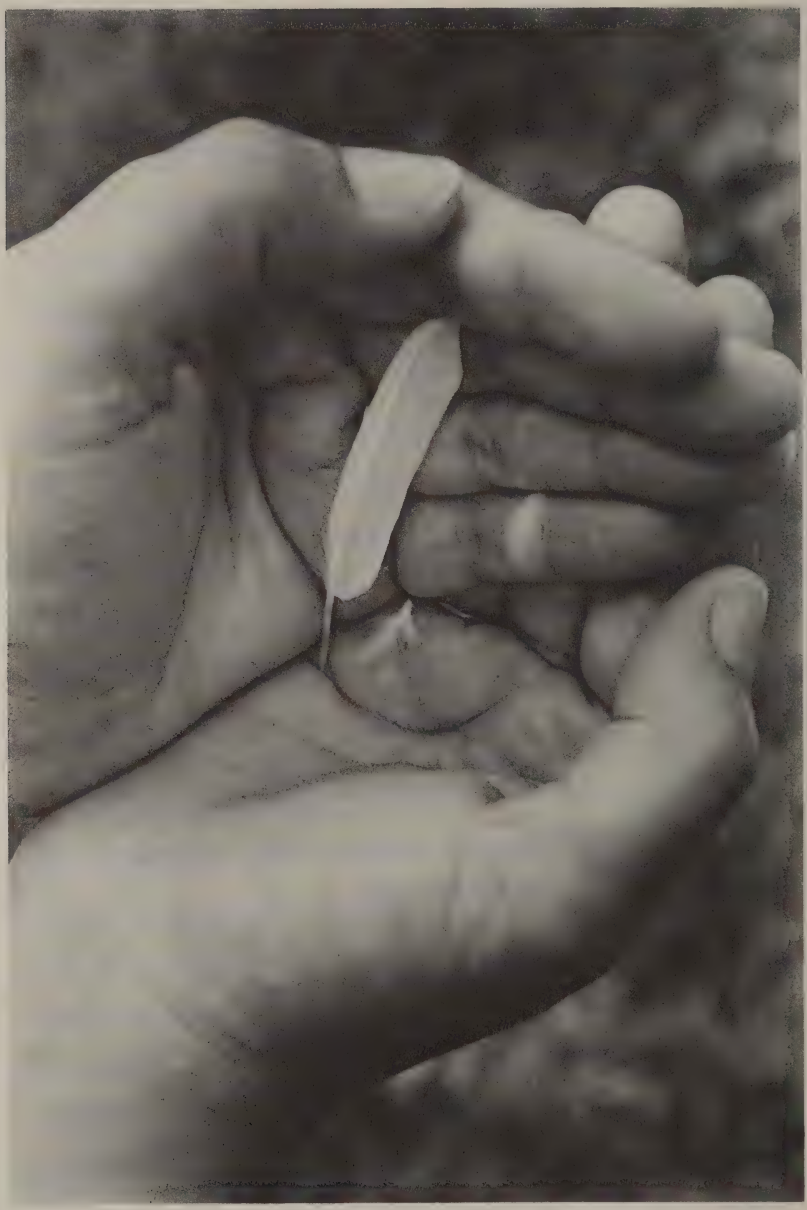
Trees are warm, touchable, welcoming, fragile yet strong. They speak very much of God's love poured out. They're like me, too, we both have seasons of fruitfulness, of rest, of barrenness, of growth; the capacity to

nourish life, to bring shelter and rest. We both have a certain hardness, or sturdiness, depending on the circumstances, and we both benefit from pruning.

> Some of my nicest moments in the monastery have been spent in the vegetable patch. You remember the part in *The Brothers Karamazov* in which the monk embraces the earth? The sense of oneness in being is so strong that sometimes I'm inclined to give the ground a big hug, too.

It was a short step from learning from trees to working with wood. I'm sure we're all aware of coming face to face with Mystery when we start out to do the ordinary or mundane. That's what happened to me with wood. It started with my needing a gift and finding a piece of wood that might be a nice something, and in the process of shaping and carving, there it is: Beauty; not in what I've done, but what's already in the piece in it's natural state. The sense of touch becomes sacramental, and working with one's hands becomes worship, and a means of expression of what might be too hard to put into words. The designs are already in the wood, asking to be brought out. They give hints of their presence in the grain and general shape.

In working on a piece one learns much about limitations, in the material itself, in the tools, and in oneself. In learning to work with those limitations a oneness develops, so that one is no longer working against an inanimate piece of creation, but begins to work *with* it and *with* the tools, and together we all form something that will bring enjoyment to someone else. If the tools or wood are forced to do something they can't, the piece gets damaged or the carver gets cut. The need for that basic contemplative stance of reverence has been brought home again and again. This carries over even into relationship with the intended recipient of the gift. There's a deeper awareness of the goodness of the person, and a desire to live what I'm trying to express in the work. This whole dynamic seems to be a part of entering into Mystery, because it continually opens, calls forth more questions than answers, and ends in silent adoration. Beauty is more that what pleases the senses, but is the very love of God poured out. It leaves one with joy and thanksgiving for being crafted.



Tom Dunham

Woodworking is something I do mostly in winter; as soon as the ground thaws I'm into the soil, working on my flower garden. Once I read that when a farmer looks over the land before planting, he or she doesn't see the bare ground, but sees it full and fruitful with crops. That's my experience too, and I suspect that that's how God looks at us. Seeing us in all our fruitfulness.

The garden is my greatest source of pleasure, yet there I'm confronted with some of the deepest questions and realities of life. Dependence on God, the fragility yet strength of life; why death? Why do some seeds die and others grow and bloom? Interdependency? Why life anyway? One of the hardest questions that confronts me is, "Why do things have to kill in order to live?" Haven't worked this out yet, but I know that both life and death are expressions of Love: that only animate things can give life (except water, non-living in itself, but part of every living thing) and that death is life absorbed to a higher level. This brings to awareness my own death, and the realization that life is a gift freely given, and that it really belongs to Another. The life I know now is like the seed, and who knows what beauty will be revealed when it comes to full growth. The God who provides sun, rain, and soil provides all else besides. Gardens are about growth, about becoming what one is called to be, and about nourishing life. Each type of plant has its own needs, and when in the proper environment and given the proper care, they flourish. If not cared for they might grow but won't produce much.

Weeds are the best example of the "will to live" that I've met. Some weeds (and some flowers too) can grow new plants from little pieces of roots left behind when the main part of the plant has been removed. Life isn't generally fragile and easily snuffed out. It's determined and will brave many obstacles to survive. What a surprise to move a stepping stone and find a daffodil trying to grow under it!

Growing food crops is one of the greatest wonders. We lack the personnel to have a vegetable garden now, but some of my nicest moments in the monastery have been spent in the vegetable patch. You remember the part in *The Brothers Karamazov* in which the monk embraces the earth? That sense of oneness in being is so strong that sometimes I'm inclined to give the ground a big hug, too. It's easy to see why God put Adam and Eve in a garden. It's a good teacher and revealer of God and of ourselves. It's a place of testing too, and I have to admit that for a time I used it to hide from God, but it didn't work. In becoming more in-

volved with busyness and less with wonder, life became meaningless. What had been joy and pleasure became empty. In using it to seek self I became an exile. The only place to go was back to God, to learn again about dying, about simplicity, about what life is all about: sharing God's life and love. Creation seems to rebel when used against its purpose, but that's projection really, because creation can only serve and be in harmony. It's we who rebel. God is good, and like the perennials that return in the spring, brings growth and life again when the cold is gone. God's name is Mercy. In fact, all of creation is an expression of this name.

In a far corner is a weeping birch—weeping trees aren't my favorites—but that corner gives a little more solitude for prayer. Anyway, one day when I opened my eyes after praying, what a delightful surprise: I was covered with seeds! Beautiful golden seeds shining in the sunlight . . . It took a moment to trace the seeds to the birch, and it's been a friend ever since.

You know how God challenges us to meet him in what we dislike? Wildlife has been one of those challenges for me. It's hard to see the fruits of one's hard work eaten up. The creatures help me to meet my fears though, and teach about broader views and Whose earth it really is. They speak of the imperfection of our world, the co-existence of opposites, and force me to look at my own inconsistencies.

The skunks are my favorites. Once going into the patio I met what looked like a black kitten. It was afraid and started to run. When I went for a closer look I saw the white stripe: then I was afraid and ran! In my fear I started watching to see where they came from in order to evict them. One evening I was standing by a pine tree, lying in wait, and when I turned there was a skunk about 10 or 15 feet away. She didn't seem to notice me at all, and walked practically in front of me, over to the apple trees. I realized that they must be pretty blind, and if I stand still they won't bother me. They're really very beautiful animals, with their long shiny coats. They taught me that my fear of the unknown can make monsters of nothing.

Squirrels are natural clowns and speak of the God of humor. They can keep their balance anywhere. They're hard workers but a little greedy. Once I gave one a cracker, and after it ate what it wanted, buried the rest

and came back for more. Often when I'm praying, if I happen to look up, there will be a squirrel looking down at me from the tree I'm under.

What I learned from rabbits and groundhogs is that things become "enemies" not because they're bad in themselves, but because they do harm to what I consider "mine." Rabbits are peaceful, gentle, and pretty, but they happen to have a taste for crocus and tulips. Groundhogs live together (they don't generally, but ours do because they're a young family) but don't seem to care about one another. They climb all over one another trying to get into or out of their hole. They get fat on my pansies and are like eating machines. Their ears are just like ours. This discovery brought home the fact that in God we're brothers and sisters. They're gentle but unattractive. God has his own ideas about beauty, doesn't he?

The opossum and raccoon are rarely seen, since they're night creatures. Part of their beauty is their rarity. Only once did I meet an opossum, on a rainy night. Our acquaintance was brief: it saw me and ran. The creatures don't know that I'm really harmless either. They teach me not to fear something because it's big or unfamiliar. If we stand and gaze, we might come to appreciate one another. We might also come face to face with God.

This Wilderness is Our Home

BUCK GHOST HORSE
Lakota

A Lokata (Sioux) teacher evokes the luxurious, teeming, greenness of America before it threatened to become a wasteland.

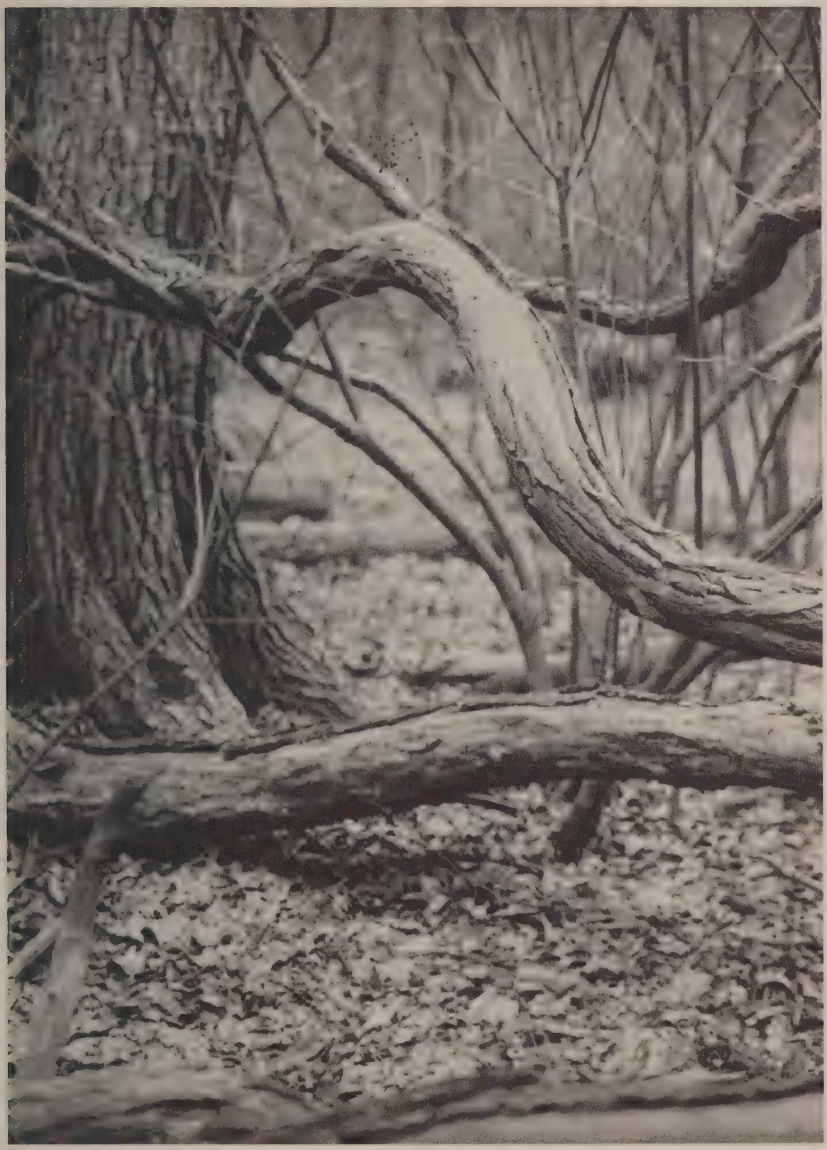
To express the feeling of our people for our Sacred Earth Mother is like trying to put into words the feeling one has the first time one sees and holds a first-born child.

When the Pilgrims and Spanish first came to this Sacred Land of ours, it was they who called this land a "wilderness." And to them it was. To our people it was home—home to over fifteen million people. This land was and is our Sacred Turtle Continent and our Earth Mother. This was the Mother who nourished us and gave us all we needed to live and to flourish. She gave us her blood, the waters, to drink and cook with. She gave us her animal and plant people to eat and her herb children for medicine and as garnishes for our food. She, this Earth, gave us everything we needed to survive and to live a happy and spiritual life.

She taught us how to live as family and as nations through observing Wolves, the Ants, the Deer, and many other of her children. Through these we learned how to form our social organizations and how to live and act with and toward each member of our society. This so-called wilderness we knew like house-dwellers know their back yard. We knew each trail and each hill and mountain. These and the Four-Legged were our neighbors and friends. We learned through them the sacredness of all creation and the total dependence of each upon another.

Our Medicine ways we learned from the Earth by observing and speaking to all the animals and birds who live around us. We were given and shown cures for every disease that lived upon our Sacred Earth Mother—every illness in this land now mis-called America. We learned from her that each of the creations of the Sacred Spirit was to give to each other so all could live. We learned from the Four Legged to take that which was needed to ensure abundance for all. This land was indeed both our provider and our sacred trust.

Buck Ghost Horse is the author of Red Nations, Sacred Ways, *which you may purchase through the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality, 3500 Mountain Blvd., Oakland, CA 94619-9989. His article was reprinted with the permission of* Creation *magazine, Box 19216, Oakland, CA 94619.*



Brooks Walsh

The first time I observed a wilderness or jungle was when I entered my first modern city, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This is a wilderness in which there is no sharing or true communal caring for the members of society but an outlook of all for one's self. Here is hurry to nowhere. Here is fear of one's environment and one's fellow citizens. This is and will remain the "wilderness."

[In Pittsburgh] there were rolling expanses where we could watch the Deer, Elk, and Antelope graze, feed, mate, and frolic with total freedom and lack of fear, and forests so thick with life it was hard to pass through them.

Our wilderness is one in which each day we saw and rejoiced in the sunrise and sunset; the rising and beauty of the moon, the total grace and majesty of the plains and the deep green forests, the abundance and beauty of the wildflowers, unmanicured, which grew free upon the plains and hills, the beautiful smell of sweetgrass and clover, which filled our very senses, and we saw after a soft rain, streams which were sweet to taste and clear so one could watch the fish people lazily live their lives. There were rolling expanses where we could watch the Deer, Elk, and Antelope graze, feed, mate, and frolic with total freedom and lack of fear, and forests so thick with life it was hard to pass through them. In the heavens one could see all of creation, the star people each night, and observe the wonder and magnitude of the creation in which the Great Mystery had placed us, his children. We abounded in beauty. We were surrounded by this silence and love of creation itself. All of this from our Earth Mother. All of this for FREE.

Yes, this wilderness was, and is, our home, our Mother, our Teacher, and our friend. It isn't and wasn't "wilderness" but a beautiful part of God and creation. It is a place to live and walk in a spiritual and sacred manner. It is GOD'S MASTERPIECE.

Haiku

JUNE MOREAU

my child's tears
how small they are
the faraway stars

giving my horse
a bundle of red clover
our eyes deepen

pinecone
clinging to its tree—
the long winter

only a candle's
worth of light
waxing moon

golden fish
in the swirling waters
of a teal-blue stream . . .

in the pine straw
the budding noses
of rabbit kits

shaping itself on the pond
the spring wind

for every child
born in the sky-womb
Earth bells ring!

swaying willow
a foal frolics
in the meadow

moonlight
losing its silver
edge of pond

billowy clouds
upon the sky
the earth's clothes

wren's song
oak-steeped shade
the coolness

the crow's
husk of sound
withered cornfield

flurry
of flowering mint
a white butterfly

one cloud
collides with another
a child listens . . .

April
In the opal
stillness of morning
a wobbly lamb

listening
to snowflakes whisper
the horse's ears

A member of the Radcliffe Seminars, June Moreau has had poems in Yankee, Phantasm, The Christian Science Monitor *and other publications. She makes her home in Lexington, Ma.*

June Moreau

in leaves
by the sweet birch
a deer antler

reaching
to touch the horizon
sound of one cricket

hobbling along the path
with the slow sun
a mud turtle

the noon bell
making the sky
treble blue!

summer morning
child chasing a butterfly
in the slippery sunlight

cranking
sounds of a bittern
somewhere . . .

moonlight
crackling
withered cornfield

watersong
skunk cabbage
unfurling

spring moon
you area tenant too
in my solitude . . .

winter evening
doves fluffed out in sleep
moon bundled in cloud

sun in the willow
snowy owl feather settles
in the moose's bed.

sun streaming
in the willow
the cicada's voice

pebbly flight
of azure butterflies
ripples on the pond

wild ducks
among tall reeds
the teal wind.

picking blackberries
and eating them
blue tang of sky!

The Needs of the Earth

THOMAS BERRY

Betty McAfee

We are presently passing over one of the most significant thresholds in the entire course of earthly history. We are passing from a human-centered sense of reality and value to an earth-centered sense of reality and value. We now recognize the larger earth community, not the human community, as normative.

In economics, we begin to realize the primary need for ecological balance rather than economic balance. We cannot continue increasing the Gross National or the Gross Human Product while diminishing the Gross Earth Product. Social poverty is ultimately less devastating than irreversible ecological poverty, although the two are ultimately associated.

Ecological refugees will soon be far more numerous than political refugees. Desertification, climatic changes of various kinds, salinization from irrigation processes, exhaustion of the soil cultivated too long without organic renewal, slash-burn cultivation in tropical regions, overgrazing, cutting of woodlands for fuel; all these causes are driving people from the land in ever-increasing numbers.

In medical practice, we begin to realize that the well-being of the planet is the precondition for the well-being of those who live on the planet. The tide of toxic materials poured into the air and water and soil is saturating the human community. The planet cannot be poisoned without also poisoning the human community.

In our legal structures, we begin to be concerned with the rights of the entire natural world, especially with the living forms of the earth. Laws concerning endangered species and the laws requiring Environmental Impact Statements indicate that new legal structures are emerging.

Most important is the new concern for the integrity of the eco-systems of the planet being manifested in the news media. Entirely new areas of concern are being developed as the media begin to understand that his-

A leader in ecospirituality, Thomas Berry is the author of The Dream of the Earth *(Sierra Club Books).*

tory is being made in our time not so much within nations or between nations but between humans and the Earth. The integrity of this relationship is the governing issue of the decades. The essential functioning of all our institutions and professions is being affected.

In ethics, we are now extending our concerns beyond suicide, homocide, and genocide, to a concern for biocide, the killing of the life systems of the planet, and for geocide, the killing of the functional integrity of the planet itself.

In education, we now see that literacy must extend beyond human language to the language of the natural world and what it is attempting to communicate to us. Our ignorance of nature is ultimately much more significant than our ignorance as regards the writing of humans.

All these changes are now taking place. We are passing over a threshold. We are learning the new language, the new sense of values. The inner dynamism is rapidly passing out of the industrial-commercial-consumer economy. We have begun to live within this planetary community of life systems on its own terms, rather than on terms that we establish. We have begun to hear the voices of the natural world once again after these long centuries when our autistic self-confinement denied us any intimate communication with the resplendent world about us.

Paul M. Schrock

Myth of Beauty Way

Today I will walk out, today everything evil will leave me,
I will be as I was before, I will have a cool breeze over my body,
I will have a light body.
I will be happy forever, nothing will hinder me;
I walk with beauty before me, I walk with beauty behind me,
I walk with beauty above me,
I walk with beauty around me, my words will be beautiful.

Navajo Prayer

Prayers to Mother Earth

When our earth mother is replete with living waters,
When spring comes,
The source of our flesh,
All the different kinds of corn,
We shall lay to rest in the ground.
With their earth mother's living waters,
They will be made into new beings.
Coming out standing into the daylight
Of their sun father,
Calling for rain . . .
Yonder all the mossy mountains
Will drip with water.
The clay-lined hollows of our earth mother
Will overflow with water,
From all the lakes
Will rise the cries of the children of the rain makers.
In all the lakes
There will be joyous dancing—
Desiring that it should be thus,
I send forth my prayers.

That our earth mother
May wear a fourfold green robe,
Full of moss,
Full of flowers,

Full of pollen,
That the land may be thus
I have made you into living beings.

That our earth mother may wrap herself
In a fourfold robe of white meal;
That she may be covered with frost flowers;
That yonder on all the mossy mountains,
The forest may huddle together with the cold;
That their arms may be broken by the snow,
In order that the land may be thus,
I send forth my prayers.

The Zuni People of New Mexico
Submitted by Mrs. Fred Perry

Song of the Earth Spirit

It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed
I, I am the spirit within the earth . . .
The feet of the earth are my feet
The legs of the earth are my legs . . .
The bodily strength of the earth is my bodily strength.
The thoughts of the earth are my thoughts . . .

The voice of the earth is my voice . . .
The feather of the earth is my feather . . .
All that belongs to the earth belongs to me . . .
All that surrounds the earth surrounds me . . .
I, I am the sacred words of the earth . . .
It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed.
Navajo Prayer

Pilgrimage Prayer

NORTH Almighty God, as the magnet of a compass is drawn to the North Pole, so you draw us to yourself. Let us remain within your call whether we be like the waters in the icy frigid time of life, the flowing melodious sound of a stream, or a gentle lapping of waves on a lake, or life's shore, or like fog or clouds rising into the heavens. Our prayer is to have you as our cause and end.

> We ask your mercy and love be showered upon those who are ill. Grant them your Light and Love physically, emotionally, and mentally. Make them conscious of your abiding in their spirit. God, we ask you to enlighten our mind, heart, and will, here on our world so that we all live according to your justice and love and live peacefully with our family, friends, and neighbors in world peace.

EAST God, as you demonstrate your power by the rising sun in the East, we thank you for that warmth that shines from your sun through the goodness of your people. We thank you for the heat of the sun that generates the fruits of the Earth and the virtues of humankind.

> We pray that our youth may accept your grace and live in virtue. We pray that we may continue the betterment of the world so that the future will be an intelligent, loving, and beautiful place to live.

SOUTH As we face South, we thank you God for the fecundity that brings about the fruits of the Earth, and the power of human generation. We ask you, Lord, to bless our families and children, and to preserve our environment in the beauty in which you presented it to us.

WEST As we face West and appreciate your fiery sunsets, we thank you, God, for the light that allows us to see and feel, and sense its warmth. For all of us here, and for our beloved ones, we ask for health of mind, body, and spirit.
Sara Murrieta

The Way to the Light Within

JOSEPH H. GELBERMAN

Prayer is a dialogue between God and The Higher Self. Genuine prayer can be defined simply in two short sentences; As I sit down to pray—meditate, I listen with the Third Ear and hear God saying to me, "I love you" and now God is waiting for my answer, which is "I love you, you are my God, you are my salvation, and you are my comfort for ever and ever."

I prefer to say meditation instead of prayer to emphasize the importance of silence. In meditation I open up to hear, to listen and to be alert to receive the message from above which I heard for the first time as I stood with my brothers and sisters about 3,000 years ago at the foot of Mt. Sinai, God proclaiming; "I Am The Lord." According to the Psalmist, this statement in the Decalogue means, if I accept God as my Savior, I will always feel safe, secure, and full of joy.

May I share with you a Kabbalistic method on how to get ready for a meditation which will manifest the Light Within and thus put one in the God Consciousness. We will use the nine letters of the alphabet beginning with A and ending with J adding the tenth letter J, which will stand for Holy Joy.

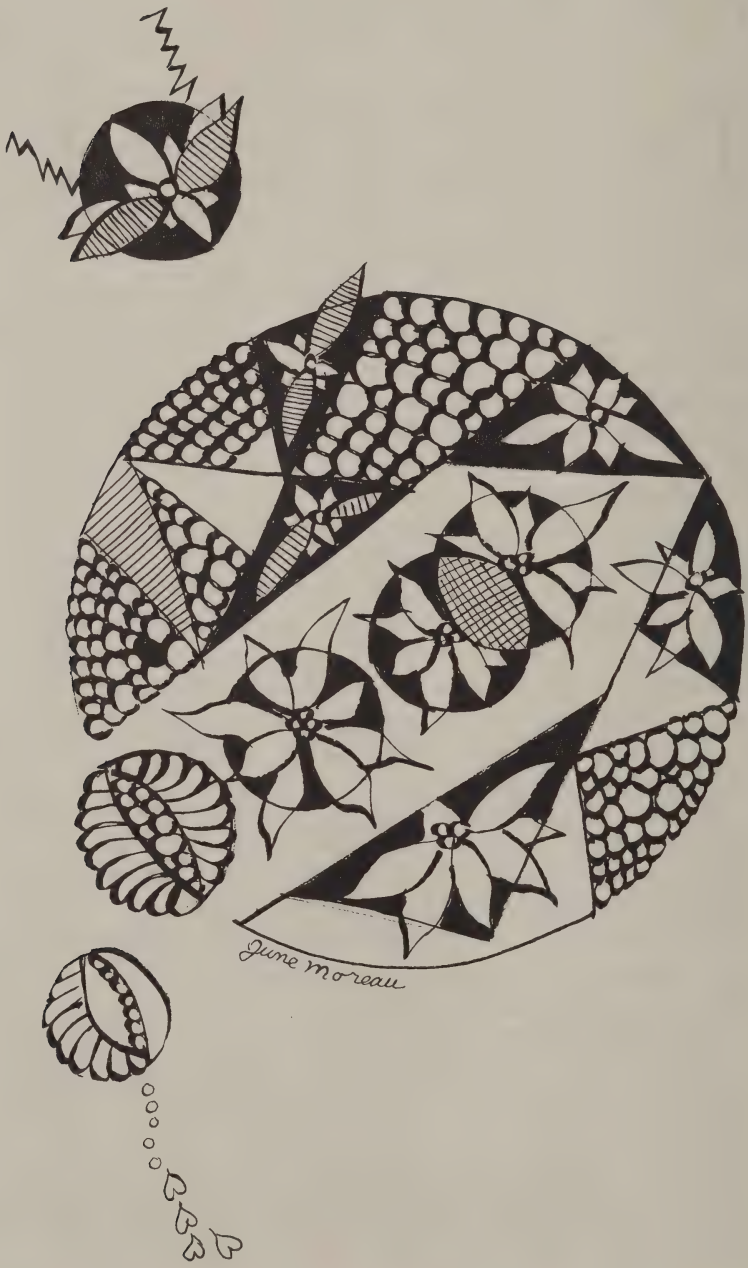
As I sit down for a meditation, usually in a lotus position with my eyes closed so that I can see further, higher, and broader, I visualize these nine letters and give each letter a special meaning which will help me to get ready for a deeper meditation.

The letter "A" stands for "Awareness." I am fully aware of the varied experiences of my life, and thus I proclaim that I am "Alive" every moment of my life. In this awareness I seek to be consciously aware of the light and the darkness, of the joy and the pain of my life.

The letter "B" stands for "Belonging." I rejoice in the fact that I am a part of all humanity transcending religious, racial, or ethnic identities. We are all members of a family of mankind.

The letter "C" stands for "Communication." Here I realize that most of my problems come about and are aggravated because I failed to honestly communicate with the other. I promise myself not to be afraid to express the Truth as I see it.

The founder of The New Synagogue in New York City, Rabbi Joseph Gelberman founded also The New Seminary, where men and women of all faiths study all religions. New Seminary graduates work in a variety of ministries, especially in counseling and healing.


June Moreau

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Please use the back of this sheet for your comments.

Why do men and women in 66 countries read *Fellowship in Prayer*? Our readers tell us:

"This is a highly inspired, ethical publication. Love streams out of it!" "Part of my devotional reading every day." "I find your articles about different beliefs very interesting and informative. They make for better understanding among all persons." "It strengthens my faith in prayer." "The idea of interreligious understanding and cooperation is very dear to me. This is the way to peace." "I love it! It is well written by beautiful, loving people! It is delightful, inspirational, and uplifting. Thank you!"

If you, too, find *Fellowship in Prayer* "a joy and inspiration" to read, won't you take a moment to read and fill in the other side of this page?

Paul Walsh
President
Fellowship in Prayer

The letter "D" stands for "Doing." A reminder to study and to realize that even this meditation that I am involved in is of no avail and empty unless it leads me to deeds of love and service.

The letter "E" stands for "Enthusiasm." The word Enthusiasm means *Shechinah*, God is within me. It follows that when I comprehend and apprehend the extra-ordinary miracle of life I cannot help but live with Enthusiasm.

The letter "F" stands for "Fairness." The very first lesson to learn is to be fair to oneself. We often treat ourselves so unjustly, criticizing ourselves without mercy. In order to be fair to others we must first be fair to ourselves.

The letter "G" stands for "Generosity." I know from experience that as I grew in spirituality, my capacity to be generous also grew. And, of course, in giving, we truly receive.

The letter "H" stands for "Holiness." To be Holy means to be a "*Mensch*," a wonderful Yiddish word for an ethical, caring person. Holiness implies Wholeness.

The letter "I" stands for "Individuality." It is only when I develop my own individuality that I can say "My father and I are one."

The tenth letter "J" stands for "Joy." I may be very unhappy at the moment, but that does not interfere with the fact that I experience, "Genuine Joy" because I know what is expected of me, to be a Partner with God in creating a more peaceful Kingdom of God on Earth.

ASK ANGELA

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Angela welcomes your questions. Please write to her c/o Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

Dear Angela,
How can we save Mother Earth?

Signed,
Concerned Fan of the Earth

Dear Concerned Fan,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me with such an important question. While pondering my answer to you, I have spent several hours in meditation in my backyard hiding behind my favorite bush, as well as two afternoons romping through field and forest.

Though I am an environmentalist and a believer in all things biodegradable, my reverence for Mother Earth has deepened in the last few years. Ever since I began taking long, leisurely strolls with my friend Barbara, I have grown to appreciate where I live in every season. Barbara and I have explored many paths and rested in many nooks and crannies along our way. Each route and rest stop has been blessed. I always feel renewed and restored when I have romped and rested in God's great backyard.

I believe that saving Mother Earth is a very private and personal act for each and every one of us. We each need to experience a transformation of heart, to fall madly and passionately in love with the planet. Each of us in our own way needs to establish a loving, committed relationship to Mother Earth. How do we do this?

First, take many walks near where you live and look for a pretty piece of Mother Earth that you feel passionate about. Make sure the spot is

close by so you can visit it often. When you visit, notice whether you feel refreshed and restored while you're there. Begin to make this spot your own. Fall in love with the quietness, the aromas, the weather, the view, and how you feel when you're there. Allow yourself to feel connected to this little piece of the planet. Roll on your back in the grass, meditate, sniff deeply, sit up, lie down. Romp. Bark. Wag. Bounce. Bring a blanket and take a nap. Write a poem. Sing a song. Lie on your back and watch the clouds roll over your head. Bring a picnic. Lovingly clean up after you've eaten. Leave your piece of the planet cleaner than you found it. Share the view with a friend. Make a commitment to keep your piece of Mother Earth sacred and safe. When you feel connected to one spot, find another and fall in love again. Yes, go have another affair.

Once you fall in love with one spot on the planet, you may find that you can extend your love and commitment out to all those other lovely spots on the planet that you know are out there, but haven't had a chance to personally visit as yet.

At present, there is a belief in the world that saving the planet is difficult, complicated, costly, and filled with uncertainty. With a transformation of heart, saving Mother Earth will become simple, passionate, and quite possible.

I have mentioned before the healing power of love and the place it has had in my own recovery from serious injury. As love has healed me, love from us all can heal Mother Earth.

I hope each of you find and fall in love with at least one of God's great views this season.

Faithfully,
Angela

Desert Words

LORETTE PIPER

For some years, my spiritual director was the Abbott of a monastery. His style of direction was more or less a continuation of the early monastic tradition in which a disciple would come to an older monk or nun with the plea, "Please give me a word, for I am perishing!" Knowing intuitively the state of the disciple, the spiritual teacher would speak one or two sentences or nothing at all, in response to the disciple's need. The word was often quite out of line with the disciple's expectations, relentlessly simple, not always comforting, and like a seed which takes root slowly in the ground of experience. For example, one day at spiritual direction, I exploded with frustration and anger, telling the Abbot that my prayers, works, and efforts were getting me nowhere and that I was sick and tired of the whole spiritual enterprise, whatever it was. His simple reply: "You're finally getting it straight."

Although I have the feeling that I really don't know what Jesus is talking about in his conversation with "the rich young man" (Mt. 19:16-26), I do experience both strong attraction and strong resistance to his provocative words and to the bottomless mystery toward which they point.

In this story, a "rich young man" comes running up to Jesus full of enthusiasm, good will, and sincerity and asks: "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" What answer does he receive? "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good." Perhaps Jesus meant, we're talking about something else here, something that can't be possessed like property or earned like income or accomplished like religious requirements. But "the rich young man's" identity is so bound up with his possessions that he cannot understand. He cannot imagine himself, cannot re-vision himself, without them, and he goes away sad about his own choice. His possessions are a hindrance to his discipleship.

It seems to me that this kind of reply to disciples' questions is a series of "desert words." It is marked by the intriguing, disconcerting, almost

Lorette Piper, rscj, is Co-director with Fr. Patrick Connor of The Duchesne Center at Stuart Country Day School in Princeton, NJ. The purpose of the Center is to provide an interfaith forum and resource for spirituality and justice. For more information, telephone (609) 924-6865.

offensive quality which sometimes characterized the early forms of spiritual direction in the deserts of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. In any case, I am left with the clear realization that if I don't want answers, I shouldn't ask questions.

Apparently, to be good, to be faithful to a religious tradition, to keep the rules properly and kindly within ones own circumstances, is not the same thing as following one's true spiritual path. Goodness does not equal discipleship. I can't set reasonable limits and confine myself to some middle road. I can't define this following ahead of time and then live up to it, perhaps because it is an ongoing relationship with a person, a following of that person, not myself, not even my favorite image of myself. My own goodness is not only not enough—it may be totally irrelevant; it may even be a hindrance. God alone can define my unique discipleship.

The authenticity of my relationship with God does not allow for a universal norm which assures me that in this area I am fulfilling my long-range plan, nor does it allow for giving God equal time with my other obligations. What limits my freedom in being a disciple? A dangerous question. The answer can cause resentful feelings similar to those of a retreatant who, when I asked her which scripture passage would be helpful now, replied: "How about the one where the woman breaks the jar of precious ointment over Jesus' head?"

When the disciples, who are completely overwhelmed, ask, "Who can be saved?", Jesus looks at them intently and responds, "With men and women this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." This kind of "desert word" creates a silence which somehow contains the whole mystery, which invites each disciple and the community of disciples to live with it, to let it take root and grow over the years.

In the following comes the revelation.

The Long Boat

When his boat snapped loose
from its moorings, under
the screaking of the gulls,
he tried at first to wave
to his dear ones on shore,
but in the rolling fog
they had already lost their faces.
Too tired even to choose
between jumping and calling,
somehow he felt absolved and free
of his burdens, those mottoes
stamped on his name-tag;
conscience, ambition, and all
that caring.
He was content to lie down
with the family ghosts
in the slop of his cradle,
buffeted by the storm,
endlessly drifting.
Peace! Peace!
To be rocked by the Infinite!
As if it didn't matter
which way was home;
as if he didn't know
he loved the earth so much
he wanted to stay forever.

Stanley Kunitz

Sifting Sand

On waking I grope to gather the
eye of what has come and
gone in the night, like sand
spilling through my fingers.

No matter. In waking dream, I
remember I have tasted
the salt of sea spray on my
lips and felt the sifting

sand between my toes and
under the soles of my feet.
Warmed by the rising sun and
centered within the circle of

rounded sky embracing earth
and ocean, embracing me—and
waking me, I know there is no
shadowed yesterday, no dark

tomorrow. Only today—and,
seen or unseen, luminous Light.

Emily Sargent Councilman

"The Long Boat" is reprinted from Next-to-Last Things, *© 1985 by Stanley Kunitz. Used by permission of Atlantic Monthly Press.*

Mother
in Your Name We Pray

Are love
Are love
Are love
Great Mother
That in that warmth
You did create us
And When that life are done
So reconfigure
All of what we are
Are love
Are love
Are love

Yet creature
Of great cosmic air
Are you
We have defiled
And as your leaves
Which life
    and
    beauty
Float into the universe,
We have plowed your earth
Not life transfigured
But life
Whose sentinel are death,
                death
Who in a final time
Grow silence
Stead all
What run the sun.

How
Have we defiled,
How
Have we uprooted,
How
Have we so joined
That you are now so choke
What air we have encased
Your seed
    and
All your blood.

Forgive us
Creature,
Forgive us
That in our rush to procreate
We have so spawned
A sewer
Where once did water sing.

Are how
Are how
Do we so heal you,
Working at that precious stone
The night are all around us.

Where are we all but human
In that voice
That lift,
That give to grace
A unity
Here
And
Here
And
Here

To pray,
Dear Mother
Here
So Pray

That we do all desist
That pestilence
We have so wrought.

That we do make
A hymn so grand
All ages still will revel
How
We did defile
You
How
We loved you more,
We did not ever do again
Your water and your air.

Mother
In your child's music
The million chant
Your April glory,
Mother
In your candle air
    Your brilliant light
    Your autumn cloak
What none can ever recreate,
Mother we do pray
As that last air we pass
You will us here survive.

Mother
In your name we pray
In your name—
    Frederick Olessi

Tree Planting Ceremony of the Central Conference of American Rabbis

Leader: We have come together as partners in the joyful and sacred work of creation—the planting of a tree. We offer thanks that this opportunity is ours, and we recite the *Shehecheyanu*:

All: Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hay-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu, ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-hi-gi-a-nu la-ze-man ha-zeh.

We praise you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

Reader 1: There is an order to this, God's universe, that is beyond our comprehension. Intricate, delicate, embracing, exquisite—an organic whole more complex and more profound than the highest tower, the mightiest cannon, the sharpest scalpel.

All: Only when we stand inside that order can we connect with it, belong in it.

Reader 2: The world of nature was given us to tame, not to conquer. We enter that world as its caretakers, not as its owners. It is our privilege to be entrusted with its care, with its safekeeping.

All: And only when we keep it safely are we kept in safety, for we are part of the plan, a link in the connectedness of all seamless parts.

Reader 3: People seek the spiritual. Where can it be found? Here, where lavish nature reminds us of the Garden. Here, where we pause in awe at nature's elegance. Here, where we re-

This liturgy was sent to FiP by Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz of Congregation B'nai Yisrael in Armonk, NY. The liturgy was prepared by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington, DC.

member that we stand within that elegance and not outside it.

Leader: Who is Man, who is Woman?

All: A little lower than the angels, entrusted with keeping God's world, with completing the work of creation. The flower, the stream, the chemistry, woman, man: each a tiny part of God's intricate infinity, each connected to all others.

Leader: Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hay-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, Ha-me-sad-er U-m'ta-kein et ha-o-lam.

We praise you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who gives order to and repairs the world.

Reader 4: In the hour when God created the first human, God brought the human before all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to the person, "See My works, how fine and excellent they are! Now all that I created, for you have I created it. Think about this and do not corrupt and desolate My world—for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you." (Eccles. Rabbah, 7.28)

All: Do not corrupt it.

Reader 5: Do not corrupt the ozone layer that permits the sun to shine upon us but insulates us from its harmful radiation.

All: Do not corrupt it.

Reader 6: Do not corrupt the climate by trapping its heat and thereby creating a greenhouse effect.

All: Do not corrupt it.

Reader 7: Do not permit oil to spill into the rivers and oceans, do not destroy the rain forests, do not poison the groundwater.

Leader: And do not wound your neighbors, God's children, for they, too, are part of the interdependence whole.

All: Today we have gathered to plant a tree.

Cliff Moore

Reader 8: Each tree absorbs a bit of our pollution, and then transforms it into oxygen, and gives us back cleansed air to breathe. Each tree is an oxygen factory; each tree is truly a "tree of life."

All: We plant in order to mend, in order to heal, in order to fix. We plant for the sake of Tikun Olam, the repair of God's order, of God's universe, our home.

Reader 9: And each planting is a reminder of our responsibility. We did not make this world; we are its product and not its producers. But it is ours to keep. We keep it by planting, and by remembering, and by connecting.

All: We plant in order to remember and remind, in order to keep and connect with this, God's universe, our home.

Leader: Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai said: If you are in the midst of planting and word reaches you that the Messiah has arrived, do not interrupt your work; first finish your planting, and only then go out to welcome the Messiah.

All: Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hay-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, she-ka-chah lo bah-o-lam.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has created such beauty in the universe.

Amen.

Twelve Step Spirituality: Taking a Healing Path

ALEXANDRA GULIANO

Miracles do happen. They sometimes require a great deal of patience, but they do happen. They are the frequent occurrences of persons who work the program of the Twelve Steps—a Path of spiritual growth containing ageless wisdom, which, followed faithfully, has led millions of men and women to inner peace and serenity.

Developed by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, the 12 Steps have been adapted and applied to many situations. This simple program has proven successful when all else has failed. It has been called "the key to spiritual health and emotional wealth."

We now have groups called Families Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Sex and Love Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Parents Anonymous, Al-Anon, Al-Ateen, Emotions Anonymous, Fundamentalists Anonymous, Workaholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Co-Dependents Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, and even Grandchildren of Alcoholics, to name some more familiar groups.

A spiritual, not religious program, the 12 Steps have no ties with a particular denomination or culture. The program is open to all persons regardless of sex, race, social class, age, or experience. There are no dues, fees, or membership lists. Meetings are held at various times of the day and evening depending on the type of group and location.

The basics of spiritual and emotional development are the principles of the program. They are the wisdom that leads all those who follow them to a daily walk with God, Who is often referred to as one's Higher Power.

Followers of the 12 Steps experience a spiritual transformation. The gambler no longer needs to lose everything; the alcoholic finds strength and serenity within himself/herself rather than in the bottle; the parent can talk calmly to the child and not resort to violence; the controlling, angry person can discover a way to work with another without lashing out and attacking; the spouse of the alcoholic can refrain from nagging and be hopeful even in the midst of chaos; the co-dependent person can

A Pastoral Associate in Green Bay, WI, Alexandra Guliano holds a master's degree in theology and worship.

finally give up rescuing and covering up for the dysfunction and incompetence of another.

But this Program must be worked. One day at a time, twenty-four hours a day. The steps are not magic, nor are they easy. But followed carefully and honestly, they are a healing path.

STEP ONE—"We admitted that we were powerless over _____ that our lives have become unmanageable." Please note that only you can fill in the blank. There you can put "alcohol," "food," "gambling," or whatever. The point is to face that there is something in your life that is robbing you of your peace and serenity. You cannot control the substance (situation, person) but you try to do so. Or you are in denial that a particular substance/situation really does have control over you. In any case, the first step is a step of surrender. We must admit that life has become unmanageable. Only then can there be hope for change.

STEP TWO—"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity." Since our life had become unmanageable, we admitted that we needed help. In the second step, we acknowledge the Source of this help, our Higher Power, God. It is this healing power that will make us whole and healthy.

STEP THREE—"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God." This is the step of humility. No longer does our life have to be guided by an unsteady will. We place our life in God's hands. We learn to seek that guidance.

STEP FOUR—"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." With the help of God, our Higher Power, we can now face the truth of our lives. For many of us this is the most difficult step because it requires a rock-bottom honesty. The action part of the Program starts here. Self-honesty and self-knowledge are essential to a healthy spiritual and emotional life. We must remove all the dross in order to find our true selves. We actually write down all our wrongs, both those which we did and those which we failed to do. This step may take a few hours or a few months. However long it takes, a thorough search of self, past and present, is crucial.

STEP FIVE—"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." By admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another trusted person exactly what we did, we rid ourselves of the nagging guilt that these actions caused. We can then enjoy God's forgiveness through the forgiveness of another person and

Tom Dunham

through self-forgiveness. This "5th Step" is a step of great courage and faith. For many persons, it is the turning point of the Program. Often ministers, counselors, and other helping professionals are asked to "do a 5th Step" with a person.

STEP SIX—"Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character."

STEP SEVEN—"Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings."

STEP EIGHT—"Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all." This is a bold step. The list must be made for even persons who have died or moved away should be listed.

STEP NINE—"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." This step takes a large helping of humble pie. This may mean writing or calling a person and asking for forgiveness. It may mean returning property or paying back money. It may mean facing someone we have successfully avoided. It may mean taking on a responsibility that we ran from. If direct amends cannot be made because of death or some other serious reason, then indirect amends can be made. I know a woman who makes amends to her deceased mother by kindness she now shows to her elderly aunt.

STEP TEN—"Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." Spiritual growth depends on daily attention.

STEP ELEVEN—"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for the knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out."

STEP TWELVE—"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

We do not need to cover up and hide those things which we fear. We must face our addictions and compulsions, no matter how painful. Only then can we intimately grasp the meaning of our suffering and only then can we help others.

The 12 Steps are an honest path—a path of peace and serenity—a path of deep integrity—a healing path.

The Blessings of Change

EDWARD M. BERCKMAN

For many people, fear of the unknown makes change difficult, and a new job, a new home, a new relationship rank high on the list of "stressors." But in the light of the eternal, changes look like opportunities—even gifts.

Last fall Florida retailers discovered a market for naturally colored leaves shipped from states further north: green leaves that changed color. Apparently people who move to tropical climates when they retire miss the change of seasons.

The change of seasons can be a reminder and symbol that change is a fact of life—of both the creation and our human life as well. We can see it as a blessing, divinely intended. If growth is a blessing, both natural and spiritual growth, it is certainly change. Physically, voices change, hair begins to grow where the skin was smooth, limbs thicken and extend, the body fills out.

New physical capabilities normally lead to increased skills and responsibilities. We leave our native families and build our own families. Schooling and apprenticeship lead to careers. Then, new situations continually confront us: in our work, our homes, in the large and small worlds in which we move. History does not stand still. It is the nature of humans as political animals to form power configurations that shift periodically. Consider how *perestroika* has changed Russia, with the ripples carrying over into eastern Europe.

As rational, creative animals, we invent, develop, then refine our inventions. New fields open up, new careers develop, new challenges face us. I need mention only the computer as one example, or, in a quite different area, the changes in our diet occasioned by what we have learned about cholesterol and its effects.

"The more things change, the more they remain the same" goes an old saying. I don't believe it. Did the possibility of nuclear obliteration enter the thinking of those whose plans and blunders led to World War II? Was earth's environment ever subjected to such threats as today? We hear about global warming and the greenhouse effect, toxic wastes and other

A former editor who spent his first ten years in China, Edward Berckman teaches at Lander College in Greenwood, SC.

Cliff Moore

forms of pollution, even a garbage glut. New problems challenge us to find new solutions.

Experience may yield to reflection on that experience and, as we realize how much we have received from the communities around us and the Giver of all good gifts, a sense of gratitude is engendered, a need to thank and praise. I personally have received bountifully from God and God's communities, especially after a serious head injury that put me in hospitals four months (in 1985-1986). Friends all over the country—even in China and Japan—prayed for me. During and after a period of rehabilitation, before I was able to drive, friends and members of the church I was serving transported me wherever I needed to go.

That change in my life certainly produced a greater awareness of God's healing power and the blessings of community. With all of us, the prayers we learned as children can give way to a deeper, broader variety: praise as well as petition, intercession for others, a readiness to listen as well as speak, an awareness of the need to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Prayer can become not just a private or corporate ritual to engage in weekly or daily at certain times; we can learn to "pray without ceas-

ing," as we begin to use the Jesus prayer or our own form of "breath prayer."

Those familiar with ancient Chinese thought may be thinking: the Chinese discovered this long ago. Change in both the physical world and human events comes from the interaction of *yin* and *yang*: yin the hidden, passive, dark, yielding, and yang the open, active, aggressive, bright. For example, warm and cold air meet to produce rain; new life may result from the mating of male and female. One source of this concept is the *I Ching*, translated as the *Book of Changes*.

But Chinese thought also speaks of the *Tao*, the eternal, ordering principle running through nature which, in human life, is the Way, a guide for human conduct. And certainly, something in us needs constancy, stability. We are aware of living in a society which often prizes novelty for novelty's sake; we too tend to be subject to the whims of fashion.

Beyond the artificially-made changes of fashion, we can see change as basic to the created order and the divine will. With the more acceptable term, "transformation," change can be a goal for our lives, as we grow into what we are meant to become.

Now 82, this FiP *reader has taken a long look back at his life and wants to share with other readers his secret for happiness.*

The Gift of Positive Thinking

ARTHUR W. MULLER

During eight years of elementary school I looked forward to each school day with a positive frame of mind. While many of my classmates dreaded the 3-R's as hard work, I found my studies a pleasant experience.

With the same lightness of heart, I attended weekly religious services in our church. One Sunday a friend remarked: "You look so happy when you are in church." He didn't know my secret: that my joy came from being with God.

After five years of study in art schools, I was employed as a designer of wallpaper and textiles in various studios. Later I became affiliated with publishing companies as commercial artist and eventually promoted as art director. Each morning as I rode the New York subways to my employment, I constantly retained a positive perspective in anticipation of taking my place at my easel to create works of beauty.

No doubts assailed my mind as I entered the married life imbued with whole-hearted resolutions for a successful marriage. Rita and I recently celebrated our 41st Wedding Anniversary.

In my retirement, I was offered a commission to paint a floral design on the walls of a prominent surgeon's mansion here in Winchester, Virginia, where Rita and I reside. I did not hesitate to accept the challenge to take on this task—40 square feet of handpainting using sixteen colors in Chinese classic design. It was completed in six weeks of constant daily enjoyment!

My next pursuits included teaching art and design at our local library and at several senior centers, all volunteer work. Since 1984 I have been teaching art at a local school owned by Shenandoah College. At 82, I am the oldest teacher on the college faculty.

All the previously mentioned pleasant experiences were shrouded in a

Arthur Muller makes his home in Winchester, Virginia.

Gisela Lichtgarn

shadow in April 1986 when I had to undergo surgery at our local hospital. Did I dread the operation, counting the days when the ordeal would take place? No, I can honestly relate that I approached the scheduled day, and previous days with the most positive attitude that I had ever experienced in all my life! God had removed my fear and replaced it with faith, a strong faith—aided by the love and devotion of my dear wife. I want to give all credit to our loving God for my positive outlook all through my life. I am most heartily grateful for this gift, and I pray for those who may need to witness the shining light of spiritual guidance.

True, I did experience during my lifetime moments of depression, discontent and sorrow, but I always tried to push negativity to the background and to brighten up with positive thoughts.

THE BICYCLE: VEHICLE FOR A SMALL PLANET
by Marcia D. Lowe, Worldwatch Institute, Washington, DC, 1989, 62 pages, paperback, $4.00.

Have you ever heard of Woonerven—the "living yards" of the Netherlands? Here, the road becomes a paved courtyard where all means of transportation are allowed but bicycles and pedestrians have priority. Cars enter only as "guests." *The Bicycle* is full of facts such as these. The author points out that problems such as air pollution, depletion of natural resources, and urban congestion could be minimized if people would let go of their attachment to cars. As she says, "One of the greatest ironies of the 20th century is that around the globe, vast amounts of such priceless things as land, petroleum, and clean air have been relinquished for motorization—yet most people in the world will never own an automobile." She goes on to quote author James McGurn who says, "The bicycle . . . quietly challenges a system of values which condones dependency, wastage, inequality of mobility and daily carnage . . ." She includes information about premier cycling cities Palo Alto and Davis, CA which offer incentives such as mileage stipends, "leave your car at home" days, and towels and shower at work to cycling commuters. Also available to commuters is an extensive network of cycling paths, lockers and racks (not a nationwide system to be sure). Only 62 pages long, this book compiles much factual, practical information about cycling and methods to promote its use as an alternative to automotive transportation. Recommended reading for anyone interested in cycling and/or breathing easier.

DHARMA GAIA: A HARVEST OF ESSAYS IN BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGY
by Allan Hunt Badiner, Ed., Parallax Press, Berkeley, California, 1990, 265 pages, paperback, $15.00.

Here is ancient experiential wisdom from a host of present day visionaries. Thich Nhat Hahn, Joan Halifax, Joanna Macy, John Seed and Gary Snyder join many of the best writers in "ecospirituality" on topics like "The Greening of the Self," "Ecology and the Experience of the Sacred," "The Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess," and "Women and Ecocentricity." Recommended for everyone who wants to help save the earth before it perishes.

We welcome your comments. Please send them to Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

The last issue of *Fellowship in Prayer* was all I heard it would be—very beautiful.

Joe Gosse; Allentown, PA

Your publication is a real blessing. God bless you.

Abbot Fidelis Dunlap, O.S.B.; Beverly Hills, FLA

I should like to take this opportunity to tell you how much each issue of *FiP* means to me. My daughter gave me a subscription almost 2 years ago, and I have treasured every copy that has come to me. As a person with AIDS, I have found the writings to give meaning to my life in ways I had not imagined. The peacefulness and serenity that come to me when reading your beautiful publication cause me to eagerly look forward to each new issue. Thank you for the blessings you have shared with me.

Claude Zetty; San Antonio, TX

I want you to know that through your work you are influencing our students. Inside the main entrance to the Arts and Science Center on our campus is a large bulletin board which faculty members use to encourage awareness of contemporary international themes. I do not know who prepared the bulletin board this month, but it is dedicated to the environment. In the center is your lovely April 1990 cover with its delicate dogwood photo. Also featured are the articles from that issue, "A Celebration of Earth Spirituality," by Judy Morgan and "Our Lost Connection with Mother Earth," by David Sawyer.

The most gratifying part of your work must be the number of lives you touch for the better. I wish you the very best and assure you of my gratitude.

Mary T. McCarthy, Professor of French, Georgian Court College; Lakewood, NJ

Someone sent a copy of your magazine to my boss and I sneaked it out of his mail and read it before I gave it to him! *I love it.* It's wonderful. Please add my name to your list of subscribers.

Wend Stewart; Tiburon, CA

At a time in my life when I was in deep need of prayer, your publication was a wellspring of comfort. It was a gift from my very best friend a year

ago—and now I renew, having been renewed in spirit by reading and meditating on it.

Name Withheld; Yonkers, NY

A short time ago a friend gave me a subscription to your magazine. It has proved to be a most wonderful gift. I save all the copies to reread again and again.

Recently, my daughter, a Dominican sister, held a centering prayer meeting and invited me to attend. There were about 20 women present. I had brought my little pile of back copies with me to give to my daughter, but instead of keeping them, she gave them out to the women. They went wild over them! I am so happy I was able to further your cause.

Mrs. William Munks; Richmond Hill, NY

FiP is a wonderful companion to my devotions. Thanks!

Lee A. Crawford; Lawrenceville, NJ

Thank you so much and keep up your important work!

Dan Novak; Providence, RI

Please send a subscription to (name withheld). She is fighting cancer and needs the peace your magazine offers. She has trouble feeling God's presence in her life right now and I know your magazine will help her.

Carol Kettering; Rock Hill Furnace, PA

Your "Editor's Intro" to the April issue of *FiP* was especially meaningful to me because each year I help lead a Cancer Recovery Retreat for St. Joseph Hospital in Denver. Your piece was so concise and helpful I plan to read it as part of my presentation there. "Feelings of love and hope" *do* prolong life and so do the words you write in each issue.

The quality of the work published in *FiP* is practical, warm, and human in a spiritual approach. Please continue the good work and may you be blessed each day. Peace and best regards.

Bob O'Rourke; Ft. Collins, CO

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, and sent to The Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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